

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) In combination:

a portable article;

a first support; and

at least one connecting element for maintaining the portable article in a secured state relative to the first support,

the at least one connecting element comprising at least one arm with a main portion and a return bend that overlies a portion of the portable article,

at least a second portion of the at least one connecting element at least one of a) is made from a hardened metal material, b) has a stepped configuration, and c) has a shaped non-flat surface so as to thereby be resistant to bending in a manner to allow the portable article to be released from the secured state,

the second portion of the at least one connecting element comprising at least one piece of substantially flat metal stock that is formed to define the at least one connecting element,

the portable article captive between the first support and return bend.

2. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 wherein with the portable article in the secured state the portable article is captive between a part of the at least one connecting element and the first support.

3. (Original) The combination according to claim 2 wherein the part of the at least one connecting element is defined by the at least one arm.

4. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the at least one connecting element comprises a base which is connected to the first support and the at least one arm projects from the base and has a first leg and a second leg projecting transversely to the first leg and the portable article is captive between the second leg and the first support.

5. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the first support is integral with the connecting element.

6. (Original) The combination according to claim 5 wherein at least a part of the first support is formed as one piece with the connecting element.

7. (Original) The combination according to claim 6 further comprising a second support and a connecting system joined between the first and second supports.

8. (Original) The combination according to claim 7 wherein the connecting system comprises a flexible cable/cord.

9. (Currently Amended) The combination according to claim 8 further comprising an alarm system ~~capable of producing~~ that produces a detectable signal as an incident of at least one of a) the flexible cable/cord being severed, b) the flexible cable/cord being separated from the first support and c) the flexible cable/cord being separated from the second support.

10. (Currently Amended) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the second portion of the at least one connecting element has a length along which the arm and return bend are formed and a rib formed therein defining extends along the length of the at least one connecting element to define the stepped configuration.

11. (Currently Amended) The combination according to claim 4 10 wherein the second portion of the at least one connecting element has an "L" shape.

12. (Original) The combination according to claim 11 wherein the second portion of the at least one connecting element defines the at least one arm.

13. (Original) The combination according to claim 5 wherein the connecting element and first support have facing surfaces between which the portable article is captive.

14. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 further comprising a second connecting element that is separate from the one connecting element, the second connecting element comprising a second arm that overlies a portion of the portable article and cooperates with the one connecting element to maintain the portable article in the secured state.

15. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the at least one connecting element is selectively securable to the first support in a plurality of different positions.

16. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the at least one connecting element has an adjusting state and a fixed state relative to the first support, the at least one connecting element in the adjusting state maintained against separation from the first support and selectively repositionable relative to the first support.

17. (Original) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the at least one connecting element comprises a base from which the at least one arm projects and the base is connected to the first support.

18. (Original) The combination according to claim 17 wherein a fastener extends into the first support and maintains the at least one connecting element on the first support.

19. (Original) The combination according to claim 18 wherein the first support comprises a wall with oppositely facing front and rear surfaces, the fastener extends through the front surface so that a part of the fastener is exposed beyond the rear surface and a securing element is attached to the exposed part of the fastener to prevent separation of the at least one connecting element from the first support.

20. (Original) The combination according to claim 19 wherein the exposed part of the fastener is threaded.

21. (Currently Amended) The combination according to claim 19 wherein the wall has a plurality of discrete openings through which the fastener ~~can be~~ is selectively extended.

22. (Currently Amended) A connecting element for securing a portable article, the connecting element comprising:

a base that is one of a) connected to and b) connectable to a first support; and an arm ~~projecting from the base and having a first leg projecting from the base~~ and a second leg disposed transversely to the first leg,

the arm having a length along which the first and second legs are formed,

the arm configured to so that the second leg captively overlie overlies a portion of a portable article that is being secured,

at least a portion of the at least one connecting element comprising a substantially flat metal material that at least one of a) is ~~made from~~ hardened metal material, b) has a stepped configuration, and c) has a shaped, non-flat surface so as to thereby be resistant to bending transversely to the length of the arm.

23. (Original) The connecting element for securing a portable article according to claim 22 wherein the first support is integral with the base.

24. (Original) The connecting element for securing a portable article according to claim 22 wherein the first support is formed as one piece with the base.

25. (Original) The connecting element for securing a portable article according to claim 23 wherein the arm and first support have facing surfaces between which a portable article being secured can be captively maintained.

26. (Original) The connecting element for securing a portable article according to claim 22 wherein the connecting element has an integral fastener thereon.

27. (Original) The connecting element for securing a portable article according to claim 26 wherein the fastener comprises a threaded element.

28. (Currently Amended) The connecting element for securing a portable article according to claim 22 wherein the connecting element has a length along which the first and second legs are defined and the portion of the connecting element has a rib formed thereon extending along the length of the connecting element and defining the stepped configuration.

29. (New) The combination according to claim 11 wherein the rib is defined on the return bend.

30. (New) The combination according to claim 11 wherein the rib extends continuously between the return bend and main body.

31. (New) The combination according to claim 1 wherein the second portion of the at least one connecting element has a length along which the main portion and return bend are formed, the portable article captive between the first support and the return bend, and the second portion of the at least one connecting element has a non-flat shape over at least a part of the length of the portion of the at least one connecting element.

32. (New) The combination according to claim 31 wherein the non-flat shape is provided on the return bend.

33. (New) The combination according to claim 31 wherein the arm has a main portion extending away from the support to the return bend and the non-flat shape extends along the length of the main portion.

34. (New) The combination according to claim 31 wherein the non-flat shape is curved.

35. (New) The combination according to claim 22 wherein the rib is formed on the first leg.

36. (New) The combination according to claim 22 wherein the rib extends continuously between the first and second legs.

37. (New) The combination according to claim 22 wherein the portion of the at least one connecting elevator has a non-flat shape over at least a part of the length of the connecting element.

38. (New) The combination according to claim 37 wherein the non-flat shape is provided on the second leg.

39. (New) The combination according to claim 37 wherein the non-flat shape is provided on the first leg.